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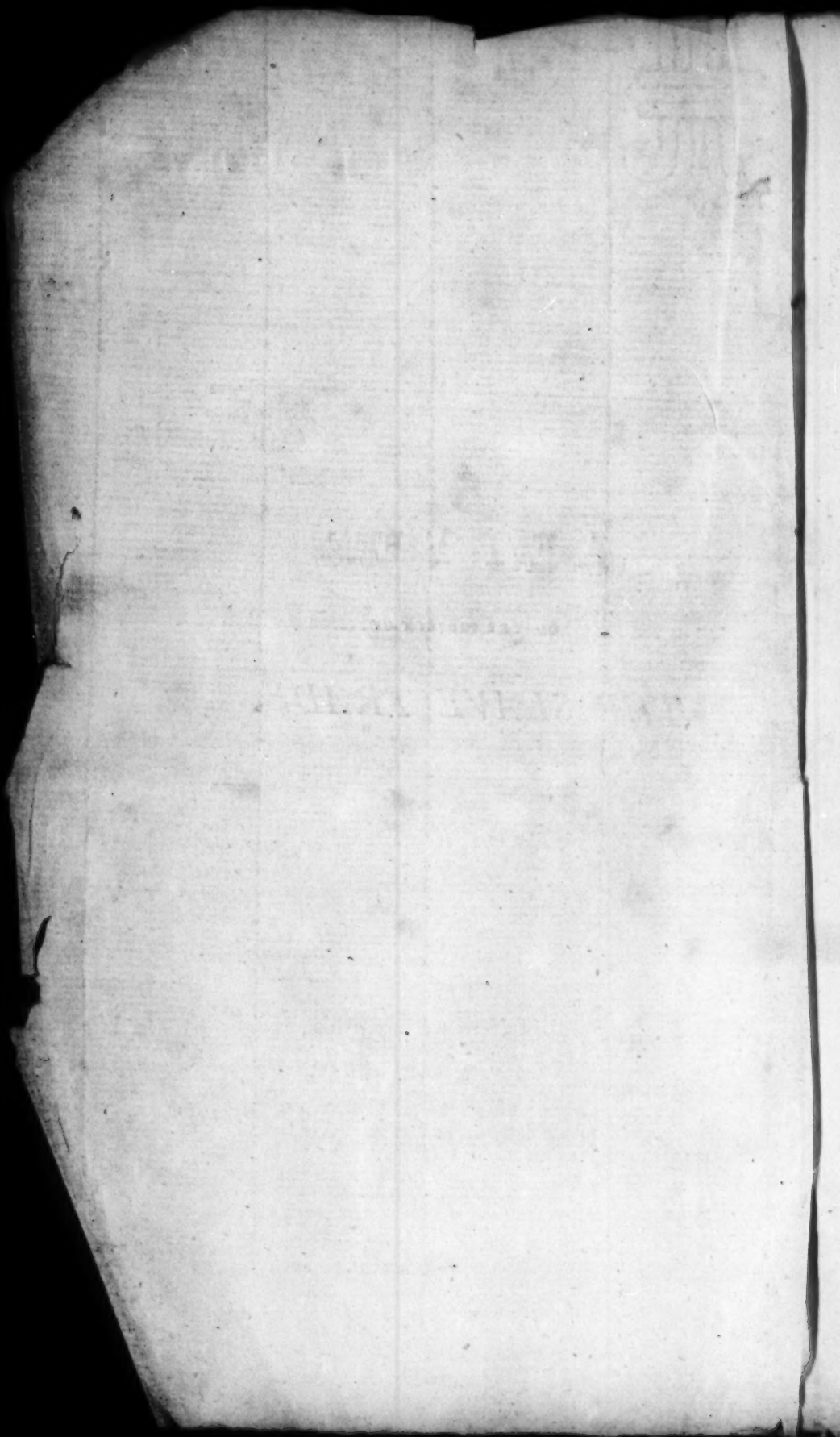
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A  
LETTER

ON THE SUBJECT OF

THE SLAVE TRADE.

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LETTER

TO THE

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

WHO HAVE PRESENTED PETITIONS

TO THE

HONOURABLE HOUSE OF COMMONS

FOR THE

ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE TRADE.

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BY A WEST-INDIA MERCHANT.

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*Ad Reipublica firmandas vires, sanandosque populos omnis nostra  
pergit oratio.* Cic. de Leg.

*Vae cæcis ducentibus! Vae cæcis sequentibus!* S. Aug.

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LONDON:

SOLD BY J. SEWELL, CORNHILL; J. MURRAY, FLEET-  
STREET; AND J. DEBRETT, PICCADILLY.

1792.

(PRICE ONE SHILLING AND SIXPENCE.)

1600/1475.

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

WHO HAVE TAKEN THE OATH

TO THE

HONORABLE HOUSE OF COMMONS

AND

DECLARATION OF THE BILLS THEREIN

BY A MEMORANDUM MERCHANT

AND BY A MEMORANDUM MERCHANT

LONDON

AND BY A MEMORANDUM MERCHANT



TO THE  
MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT  
WHO HAVE PRESENTED PETITIONS TO THE HO-  
NOURABLE HOUSE OF COMMONS,  
FOR THE  
ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE-TRADE.

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HON. GENTLEMEN,

AS Mr. Wilberforce has at length been pleased to name the day (the 29th of March) on which he is to make a new Motion for the Abolition of the Slave-Trade, it is hoped that this Address will not be considered either as presumptuous or unseasonable. That Gentleman, as you have, no doubt, observed, has lately declined any declaration of the day when he meant to make this Motion, that he might gain as much time as possible; so that his Emissaries might thereby be enabled to procure Petitions, with Instructions to you, the

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Representatives of Counties and Boroughs, to mount, behind him, on his hobby-horse. How many there are of those Petitions I do not know; if they are numerous, the reason for this Address to you is the greater.

It will naturally occur to you, Gentlemen, to inquire into the manner in which those Petitions are procured: whether they be set on foot by the unanimous consent of your Electors, or at the earnest entreaty of particular persons, instigated by Mr. Wilberforce and other Enthusiasts. It will then remain with you to appreciate the degree of regard due to Petitions so obtained; to compare the number of those who are active, with that of those who are merely passive in this petitioning business; and the number and character of both, with those of the sober and well-informed part of the nation, who leave the Regulation of our West-India Islands, as heretofore, in the hands of the Legislature.

Such

Such of the Petitions as come from Manufacturing Towns, ought to be inquired into with particular care : for there is not a Tradesman in Great Britain who does not directly or indirectly derive advantage from the African and West-India Trade.\* And it is scarcely credible, that any considerable number of Tradesmen, if their facility were not surpris'd by zealous importunity, would, from a sympathy with suffering, real or imaginary, across the At-

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\* And not Tradesmen only, but the whole of the Community of both this and our Sister Kingdom, from the most exalted Proprietor of Land, down to the humblest Cottager, derive benefit from that Trade, which, it is computed, forms a third part of the whole of the British Commerce : Farmers, Manufacturers, Mechanics, Sailors, Coopers, Wharfingers, Lightermen, Porters, and many others connected with various Trades ; besides Widows, Orphans, Mortgagees, and Annuitants, dependent on the West-India Merchants and Planters. For an Illustration of the Importance of the West-India Trade, with all its circuitous traffic—and the Importance of that Trade to the Defence of this Island, and the Maintenance of our Dignity in Europe, see a Pamphlet entitled “ The Slave Trade Indispensable.”



lantic, diminish or endanger the earnings on which they, with their families, depend for bread.

Yes, Gentlemen, you will find, on inquiry, that the hue and cry that has been raised against the West-India Planters, and the Slave Trade, is not natural, at least, not so much natural, as it is artificial. The Wilberforcian Zealots have set many Emisfaries to work, who have published a number of small Pamphlets for sale; some of them at the low rate of one half-penny each, or three shillings and sixpence per hundred. But lest, after all, they should not sell, they have been, with wonderful industry and perseverance, distributed all over the kingdom *gratis*. Those compositions are fraught with cruelties, collected from records and rumours, committed on Negroes for more than a century. One of them is addressed to the Prelates of England and Wales, beseeching them to stand forward "between the innocent inhabitants of Africa, and the merciless "RUFFIANS of Europe." Another of these

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Pamphlets is most impudently addressed to the DUTCHESS of YORK, entreating that her Royal Highness would set the example of abstaining from the use of Sugar; and informing her, that an Address to the People of Great Britain, exhorting them to refrain from the use of Sugar and Rum, was published, and thirty-five thousand copies distributed in different places; for the express purpose of procuring Petitions to you, Gentlemen, to fulfill the mischievous caprice of Mr. Wilberforce. These circumstances, it is hoped, which unequivocally indicate the true origin of the Petitions against the Slave Trade, will operate on the liberal minds of the Honourable House of Commons, as a caution against the effects of a zeal, blind, intemperate, and plainly fanatical. You will, no doubt, consider, Gentlemen, not only the will of those who have petitioned, but the interests of both those who have petitioned, and those also who have not.—You will have regard to the interests of your Constituents, whether among the

number of Petitioners, or no. You will combine the general interests of your Constituents with those of the nation and its dependencies, at large; and the interests of the nation at large, as much as possible, with the wider interests of humanity: for which we are all as much concerned as Mr. Wilberforce; though we may differ widely as to the means by which they may be best promoted.

So circumscribed are our views into futurity, and so mysterious the chain which in the complexity of human affairs, binds the effect to the cause, that the result of an untried system sometimes turns out to be the very reverse of what was intended. As there is nothing solitary in Nature, but all things are connected together by first principles, and by various relations, it often, nay, it commonly happens, that the immediate object of any particular innovation is of little magnitude or importance, compared with the collateral circumstances that may attend, or the consequences that may

may flow from it. For this reason, the wisest nations have ever paid the most profound respect to the customs and institutions of their ancestors. The most prudent individuals, too, are averse to innovation, and governed in their conduct, by cautious circumspection: rather studious of improving, than ambitious of controuling circumstances; and willing to endure some evil for the sake of certain good, rather than to risk certain good for the chance of removing that evil.

Slavery is an evil inseparable from the barbarous state of society. In comparison of the dreadful alternative for which Slavery was substituted, it was even a degree of mercy. It had its source in that degree of civilization which takes place, when human nature emerges from the savage to the barbarous state, and which inclines the conqueror rather to sell his prisoners to foreign purchasers, than to put them to the sword. In all our judgments of transactions we ought to have respect to



the circumstances in which they take place: inasmuch as what may appear hard, cruel, and unjust, in certain given circumstances, may be lenient, humane, and generous in others. Although it be common for men in the civilized and refined stages of society, when at their ease, to talk of preferring death to slavery, the rude barbarian, obedient to the first law of nature, gladly exchanges personal service for life.

No human condition is absolutely happy and independent. There is a mixture of misery in every lot, and all men are more or less dependent on one another. There is a mutual connection and subordination that runs through the whole family of mankind, from the Sceptre to the Spade, from the King on the throne, to the Peasant attached to the soil, and doomed to earn his bread by the sweat of his face, all the days of his life. Whether we have respect to former or present times, we shall find that a very great majority of the human race have been, and now actually are,



are, in the state of Bond-men and Bond-women, to such of their fellow-men as were destined by Providence to move in a higher order in political society. As there are gradations in animal and intellectual nature, so also there are gradations in human society. Such, in reality, is the actual situation of human affairs: such the œconomy of Providence. And why should there not be divers stations as well as divers orders of beings? If it be fit that there should be Men as well as Angels, and Beavers and Elephants as well as Men; why, in like manner, should there not be Bond-men and Bond-maidens, as well as Princes and Princesses, Kings and Queens?

The minds of men are fitted by education and by habit for the different states and stages of society in which they exist. Nor, were the hearts of all men laid open, would there be found so great a disparity, in point of happiness, between the higher and the lower ranks of life as is vulgarly imagined. It is the abuses, therefore, of

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SERVITUDE that we ought to attack, not the Order of SERVITUDE itself: for this is, in good truth, to fly directly in the face of Providence. If Slaves are mal-treated by their Masters, correct their Masters by the chastisement of wholesome laws: receive the sufferers into the protection of a just and mild government: but let not our Reformers attempt the total Abolition of Slavery until they have shewn that there is not, and that there ought not to be, in human life, a diversity of conditions; that there is not, and that there ought not to be, in the moral world, such a waving line, as that which, rising and falling with hill and dale, both beautifies and blesses the face of external nature.

The advancement of tribes and nations of men from rudeness and ferocity of manners, to civilization and liberty, must be gradual. Sudden transitions from one state to another, like convulsions in the human frame, agitate society, and endanger its existence. \* It is by a meliorating

ing change in men's minds, not by the operation of sudden and violent laws, that either nations or individuals can pass from vice and barbarism to virtue and refinement. The truth is, the situation of the Negroes at present is, for the most part, such as suits their characters. And it would better become Mr. Wilberforce and his Associates to *prepare* them for Freedom, than to pursue a course of conduct calculated to rouse them to an Insurrection, and act over again all the horrors of St. Domingo: accounts of which have been transmitted by the West-India Planters to all the Members of the British Legislature. Let them go to the West-Indies, and afterwards to the Coast of Africa, in order to implant in the minds of the Negroes principles of morality; to give them just ideas of the particulars in which Liberty consists; to teach them their duty to God and man; and, in a word, to set their minds free before their bodies. Without religion, without morality, without agriculture, manufactures, arts and sciences,

sciences, it is impossible for the inhabitants of the Gold Coast to avoid those evils which involve Slavery, or, what is worse, the frequent and horrid murder of their captives by fire and by sword, to satiate revenge, or to gratify superstition. To frame laws for the Abolition of Slavery and the Slave Trade, resembles those chemical and corrosive medicines that lacerate and dissolve the constitution they are intended to cure. The man who, uniting benevolence with wisdom, labours to raise the character of the Slave to a susceptibility of perfect freedom, by religion, and all good arts, and at the same time to soften and soothe the period of his servitude, by humane regulation---such a man acts like the wise and good physician who is very sparing of medicine, much more of phlebotomy and amputation, and trusts chiefly to the gradual influence of air and exercise, and in all things a proper regimen.

It is by this gentle and progressive alteration that Divine Providence produces good out of evil, and rises to higher and higher  
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dispensations in the works of Nature and of Grace. Let us mark this divine conduct, and make it an object of imitation. The condition of Servitude is one of the conditions in which human nature is destined to appear. And all changes of that condition have, of necessity, been gradual. The general introduction of personal Freedom into the West, for Slavery still exists in the East of Europe, was the work of ages. It is not many centuries since Slave Markets were established throughout the whole of Europe, from Rome to Gottenburg, both inclusive. Nor would Europe have ever attempted, much less have effected the happy alteration that has so generally taken place within her own borders, if she had not been aided by the benign influence of the Christian Religion.

Here, then, are two points of capital, of primary consideration to the British Legislature, and to all friends of humanity, at the present important crisis, pregnant with the fate of millions of Europeans, whose  
means



means of subsistence are interwoven with the present system of cultivation in the West Indies; and millions of Africans too: for were it possible that all the States of Europe should agree in passing a general law for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, it would be impossible to prevent the African Slaves from reeking with the blood of young and old, taken captive by an enemy, who, when the Slave Trade had ceased, would have no other effectual method of securing his dreaded foe.\* These two points are, first, that the Emancipation of civilized Europe was slow, gradual, and progressive: secondly, that it was the effect of morality, and above all, of the humane doctrines of Christianity,

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\* After the Abolition of the Slave Trade in England, the Danes, in the 14th century, who had not now, as formerly, a ready market for their captives, nor could afford to give them a share of their provisions, nor yet detach a body of men from the army sufficient to overawe and keep in order a number of prisoners, to the amount of 8,000 men, put them all to death, about one hundred alone excepted; among whom were four Monks. *Richard Hoveden and Whartoni Anglia Sacra*, in the British Museum.

tianity, operating on the minds both of Masters and Slaves: disposing the former, as much as was possible, to grant; and qualifying the latter to receive and demean themselves with propriety under the blessings of Freedom. When the Historians and Legislators of the middle ages speak of the Abolition of the Slave Trade, we are not to imagine that all Servitude ceased at once: for the contrary is clearly proved, by the concurring testimonies of the most authentic records. The truth is, that absolute was gradually changed into limited Slavery: in which the Slaves were invested with certain privileges, and secured from the arbitrary disposal of a cruel or capricious Master. For example: In the 13th century, it was enacted by a law in Norway, that a Slave should obtain his liberty by a prescription of twenty years: and by the same law his life was protected from the tyranny of his Master; whose life was answerable for that of his Slave, if he should murder him.\* By another  
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\* Frostathing's Laws of King Hacon Haconsen.

Norwegian law, passed in the reign of King Oluf, the Slave had a *peculium* or small property, accruing from his own industry, when employed in his Master's service; \* a property which enabled an industrious Slave, in the course of time, to gain his Freedom. The Master of a Slave could not refuse him his Liberty, when a tender was made to him of the purchase-money: nay, it was sufficient if half the sum was delivered in hand. The manumission prescribed by that humane law was as follows: " If a Slave takes land and settles, " then shall he give an entertainment, called the *Feast of Liberty*, the expences of " which shall be nine bushels of malt and " a ram. A free-born man shall cut off " the head of the ram, and the Master shall " unlock the collar surrounding the Slave's " neck. If the Master refuse to grant permission to his Slave to give the Feast of " Liberty, then shall the Slave request it before

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\* Snorro Sturleson's *Historia Rer. Norwegicar. Hafniae*, 1777, vol. ii.

" before two Witnesses, and in their pre-  
 " sence invite his Master, with five friends  
 " of his. The Slave shall then prepare the  
 " entertainment, and let the uppermost  
 " seat be ready to receive his Master and  
 " Mistress. Thus the Slave shall recover  
 " his Liberty, which recovery he shall  
 " prove by those who were present at the  
 " Feast, against all attempts that his Mas-  
 " ter may make on his personal freedom  
 " in future."

Personal Slavery was generally abolished  
 in Europe, about the close of the four-  
 teenth century. But a new description of  
 Bond-men arose every where, except in  
 Iceland, Norway, and Sweden, known un-  
 der the name of *Villani*, and *Glebæ Adscrip-  
 ti*, who were nothing more than Slaves,  
 save that they could not be exchanged and  
 sold as brutes, or without the land, with  
 respect to which they were considered as  
 cattle. It was not till Kings, making  
 common cause with the People against the  
 usurpations of mighty Chiefs, and other

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inferior Lords, after their example, erected Royal Burghs, and Burghs of Barony, with peculiar rights and privileges, that Freedom from territorial bondage, as well as personal slavery, was extended, in this quarter of the world, to any considerable number of the human race. With the policy of Kings, in the gradual work of Emancipation, as already observed, but particularly the protection of *Villani* in Burghs, the benevolent spirit of the Christian Religion, which considers all men as the children of one common parent, concurred. Lords and Masters were taught, that by the manumission, or money advanced for the redemption of Slaves, they performed services acceptable in the sight of Heaven, and redeemed from ruin their own souls. It was in this easy and gentle manner that Liberty was introduced, and is still making progress in this quarter of the world. Changes more sudden and decisive would have only tended to derange the order in which human affairs were at that period proceeding; and, by prolonging



ing the reign of confusion, anarchy, discord, and barbarity, to prolong also the misery, together with the excessive inequality of mankind. It is dangerous to tear away, at once, the bandage from eyes that have remained long in darkness, and at once to expose them to the full blaze of the meridian sun. In order to the perfect Emancipation of Slaves, it is necessary, in the first place, that they be made capable of being made good members of civil society. The full tide of Freedom, let in upon them all of a sudden, would only intoxicate their brain, and lead them into a course of vicious excess, that must involve misery and ruin, both to themselves and others connected with them in society.—The truth of all this is emphatically illustrated by what has passed and is still passing, in our day, in Russia; a country connected with Great Britain by so many ties of reciprocal interest, and friendship uninterrupted, but by a late negotiation, which, it would be good for the credit of the nation, if it could be buried in perpetual

petual oblivion. Let us adhere to good old friends, and good old laws and customs. It would be equally impolitic to dis sever Great Britain from Russia and from the West Indies. But to return to the particular point in question: the inaptitude, and, indeed, the aversion of Barbarians to sudden and abrupt schemes of Civilization and Freedom, exemplified by certain late occurrences in the Russian Empire.

The Czarina, with that grandeur of design which has uniformly marked her character, was willing, on her accession to the Imperial Throne of Russia, to raise the Peasants, attached to the soil, to the condition of Freeman. A clause was inserted in her new code of laws, which would have effected this object in a very rapid manner. But it was soon found necessary to erase this clause, for the peace and safety of the nation. The barbarous people, knowing as little bounds between liberty and licentiousness, as between a reasonable

sonable sway and despotic rule, abandoned themselves to the most infernal intoxication and excess; and had they not been restored within their usual folds of fixed custom, would have proceeded, as some of them in fact did, and many threatened, to a general massacre of their Lords, and universal devastation.

The Empress, however, did not abandon her generous design, though she was obliged to adopt more leisurely ways of carrying it into execution. Consulting the history of modern Burghs, Burgs, or *Burgagia*, she found that a class of people had been gradually introduced, and nourished up in these, in a very different condition from the inhabitants of the country, or *Rustici*, whose occupations were entirely confined to agriculture, or the breed of cattle; and who, chained to the soil which they were doomed to cultivate, were not allowed to apply themselves to any kind of commerce or mechanical employment. It became a law, she learned, in different

parts of Europe, that if the predial Slave of any Lord should purchase a *Burgagium* in any Burgh, even to the extent of a single rood, and remain therein for the space of a year and a day, without being challenged by his Lord, he should thenceforth be free, and enjoy all the rights and immunities of a Burgeſs, provided that he did not belong to the King.

The Empreſs, improving on this plan, built the town of SOPHIA, ſo called from her own maiden name,\* as an Aſylum for the Peaſants, in certain circumſtances and under certain eaſy conditions. But here again a new inſtance was exhibited of the difficulty of making great political changes, without drawing after them evils as great as thoſe they were deſigned to remedy. The Peaſants, on the ſlighteſt occaſion of diſſatisfaction, and often without any occaſion at all, became mutinous, neglected their labour,

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\* The Empreſs was chriſtened by the name of Catherine II. on her marriage.



labour, and talked of making their elopement to SOPHIA.

In the middle ages, the erection and population of Burghs was greatly favoured and facilitated by a religious spirit, which disposed the Masters of Slaves to connivance at escape, or to direct manumission: and so great, in that age, was the authority of the Church, that Masters of Slaves were obliged to submit to such conditions of humanity as the Church thought reasonable. There is nothing of all this spirit and authority in the Greek Church at present: and from this disparity, in one unthought of circumstance, arose the disappointment of the Czarina's gracious designs in her new town of SOPHIA.

One measure yet remained to the magnanimous Catherine, and that she has successfully pursued, and still pursues. In establishing, in many different parts of the empire, Foundling Hospitals, she establishes so many Nurseries of Freemen. In

these any child may be put by his parents, and is received, if exposed or deserted. There they are well taken care of and educated. At a proper age they are put out to apprenticeships, to the trades for which they shew most genius and inclination; and then they are perfectly free. I shall just mention another passage in the History of Modern Russia, which is also directly to our present purpose.

The present Archduke of Russia was induced, from the noblest motives, to manumit all the Peasants on one of his estates, by way of experiment, how far he might venture on the same measure in others. The Peasants were put in possession of the stocks on the different farms, and thenceforth to pay certain fixed rents for a limited term of years, instead of personal service. They were at first infinitely delighted with their new situation.--- They reaped the harvest, abandoned themselves to drunkenness, and sold all the produce of the soil, without even leaving seed for

for another crop. They fell of course into extreme misery: and unanimously joined in a Petition to the Archduke, which was readily granted, to be taken under the charge of their former Overseers, into their former servile situation \*.

Instructed by the history of Europe in the middle ages, and that of Russia in the present time, wise Legislators will not attempt a sudden, but gradual Emancipation, whether in the West-Indies, or on the Slave-Coast of Africa. Let the hardships of the Slaves be mitigated, as in other countries, and other times, by humane and judicious regulations. The West-India Planters, and the British Government too, have done something in this way.

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\* These instructive and interesting particulars in the Modern History of Russia, are given on the authority of Mr. Swinton, a Gentleman a near relation of the great Admiral Greig, who has in the Press, and is soon to publish his Travels in Russia and Scandinavia, in the years 1788—89—90— and —91.

way. They have only to proceed from one step to another, in the same course, in order to combine the highest possible degree of mercy, to the greatest number of mankind, including Europeans as well as Africans, with the greatest degree of political wisdom. For example :

I. The Sierra Leone Company are now endeavouring to form one or more Settlements on the African Coast, on the ground of a friendly and commercial intercourse with the Natives. If such Settlements shall thrive, leagues may be formed with the Princes for the purpose of regulating the conditions of Servitude in such a manner as to promote at once the interests of the Prince, of Commerce, and of Humanity. Such Negroes alone, it might be established, to be exposed to sale, as in that prolific climate are in immediate danger of perishing, from a redundancy of population, through want of necessary subsistence ; or prisoners of war ; or such as are convicted of crimes.---That married people,



people, with their children, if in any of these unfortunate predicaments, should not be separated, but received into a state of Servitude all together.---And, in this last particular, greater leniency would be shewn, very properly, to those African Prisoners, than is extended to our own Felons transported to Botany Bay.

II. There can be nothing more certain, than that the most beneficial effects would flow from a careful attention to the Morals of the Negroes, which would be best improved by a serious and devout education in the principles of the Christian Religion. This would console those poor labourers, in that humble sphere in which Providence has destined them to move, with the hope of a future life beyond death and the grave, in which they, as well as *Onesimus*, the Bond-man of *Philemon*, would be admitted into a participation of that bliss, which is reserved for those who believe and obey the precepts of the Gospel. It will not be denied, that the punishment inflicted on the Negroes, however these may be severe, are for the most part drawn on themselves, by their own bad behaviour. The Christian doctrine and hope would sweeten their temper, preserve them from stripes, and make them beloved and  
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tenderly treated. Let Teachers of the Gospel, therefore, devout and serious men, be provided, for the regular instruction of the Negroes.\* Good morals and habits would encourage Matrimony, and Population; which might be farther encouraged by Premiums, at the public expence, on the birth of children to be divided between the Parents and the Master.

III. Hospitals might be established for the Care and Education of Negro Children, at the public expence.---Here, too, there would be employment for many of the children's mothers in the capacity of nurses. If there be not, in reality, something in the climate unfavourable to the Population of Negroes, Public Hospitals of this kind, which it would be the interest of the Planters as much as possible to encourage, would raise up such a number of young native Cultivators, as would diminish the Slave Trade; and, in concurrence with other favourable circumstances, from time to time duly improved,

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\* A very striking proof of the happy influence of Christianity on the minds of the Africans, is exhibited by the successful labours of the Moravian Brethren among the Danish Negroes; who, sober and industrious, very often purchase their Freedom.

proved, finally abolish it.----Farther on this subject, there is this evident dilemma :

Either the West-India Planters are duly attentive to the health and comfort of their labouring dependants, and are due encouragers of matrimonial and parental affections ; or they are not. If they are, and that, after all, the population of our West-India Settlements is not able to feed itself, it is plain, that the cultivation of the Islands is not compatible with the entire Abolition of a Trade in Slaves, or Indentured Servants. But, if they are not, then it is in the power of Government, aided by all humane men who wish well to the Negroes, to take mothers and children under their care, and to raise a healthy and flourishing race, sufficient for the labour of the ground, without the Importation of any, or of any considerable number of Slaves from Africa. The experiment of Hospitals is worth making, if it were only to decide that problem.

Let

Let every mother, after a certain period of pregnancy, be received into one of the public Hospitals, and kept there until a certain period after her delivery. And let her Master be assessed in a reasonable allowance for her maintenance. Let the children, after a certain age, be indentured for such a term of years, for such a sum, as may indemnify the expence of upbringing and education. Charitable Contributions to those Hospitals might shorten the period of the young Negro's Servitude: and thus the piety and goodness of the world at large would wear away Slavery, as heretofore in Europe, by degrees; and no violent loss or disaster would accrue to the Planter, who, on the system of Slavery, and the faith of repeated laws, embarked his capital, his industry, his hopes, in this world.

IV. As the Norwegian, Swedish, and other Slaves had their little properties, by which, duly improved, they were enabled to gain their Freedom, the price of which



which was under public regulation, so let the price of Freedom, at such and such ages, or after such and such a period of Servitude, be declared by Act of Parliament. Let a prize be held up to the spirited Negro, to be gained by industry and good behaviour. His animated hope would display itself in various virtues, and the restraint of various vices. The hope of Freedom will excite his voluntary industry, and habits of industry will render him worthy of Freedom. Many a Negro has been known to clear, besides many comforts for his own family, by the produce of his little property, or *peculium*, from twenty to thirty, and even forty pounds a year: so that there is a fair probability, that any Negro would soon be enabled to gain the price of his Liberty, if he desired it, and deserved it.

The day arrived when the price of liberty is made up, the African, as heretofore the Scandinavian Slave, would joyfully give the Feast of Freedom. If he  
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can afford, on ordinary Sundays or other holidays, to entertain a neighbour with pepper-pot, a pig or a turkey, and a can of grog, we may reasonably presume, that on the grand holiday of Manumission, his entertainment would far exceed that of the poor Scythian's ram, and nine bushels of malt.\*

Compared with the situation and the prospects which the African Cultivators of the West-Indies either actually enjoy, or, by a few regulations, practicable and easy, might be put in possession, what are those of the subjects of DAHOMY, and other kingdoms in Africa, where the joy and the sorrow, the hope and the fear, the gratitude and the revenge—every passion of the Superior and Prince is drenched in the blood of his Inferior and Subject? Is it cruelty to translate men and women from such a country, to one that is under the care and influence of the British Government?

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\* See page 16.

vernment? Nay, I will not compare the condition of the Blacks in our West-India Islands, with that of the Savages on the Coast of Africa, whose native Freedom consists only in quarrels and lawless plunder, and in throwing the die of war, whether they shall be either slaughtered or sent into bondage themselves, or have the satisfaction of slaughtering and enslaving others. I will be bold to compare it with that of the poor Cultivators of the British Soil, whom a passion for entails, and the excessive monopolization of land, has reduced to a situation of as little hope, and of less immediate comfort than that of the West-India Negroes. This matter is described, with equal accuracy and sensibility, by Captain Newte, of the East-India Company, in his late TOUR in ENGLAND and SCOTLAND, which deserves all the praise it has every where obtained, in the following manner :

“ Compare the civil state of the immense  
“ farm, with what it was when the same

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“ tract

" tract of land was parted among a dozen  
 " or more possessors, who cultivated the  
 " land with their own hands, in the vigour  
 " of life, and in their advanced years di-  
 " rected the labours of their sons and daugh-  
 " ters. If they laboured, they laboured for  
 " themselves: for all that remained, after  
 " paying the rent, was their own. This  
 " independency, this degree of liberty nou-  
 " rished industry, and industry provided  
 " conveniency and comfort. They lived  
 " together under one roof; together they  
 " shared in the labours of the field; to-  
 " gether they enjoyed the wholesome re-  
 " past; and together adored, in private,  
 " as well as public and social worship, the  
 " benign and bountiful giver of all good:  
 " —Filial, paternal, and fraternal affection  
 " was nourished; and innocence was pre-  
 " served. Conscious independence min-  
 " gled security and satisfaction with a de-  
 " gree of decent self-esteem, and sincere  
 " religion dignified and exalted the soul.  
 " How changed this happy scene! Clumps  
 " of ancient trees, seen here and there,  
 " amidst



" amidst forests and pasture fields, denote  
 " the place where a village or hamlet once  
 " stood. The Husbandman, with his aged  
 " partner, if yet in life, pines in poverty  
 " in some narrow cell, in a town, and thinks  
 " with regret on the past joys of the coun-  
 " try. Their sons and daughters have  
 " become the servants, the day-labourers  
 " of their rich neighbour, who has re-  
 " moved the ancient land-marks, added  
 " farm to farm, rased the farm-steeds of  
 " the old tenantry to the ground, save  
 " here and there a habitation for his work-  
 " ing people, and built an elegant man-  
 " sion, where his Lady entertains her  
 " guests from town, with cards, balls, and  
 " costly feasts. The poor Cottagers, such  
 " is the monopolizing rage of their Mas-  
 " ters! are left without one ridge of land  
 " to feed a cow for giving milk to their  
 " children: and, if they venture to keep  
 " a pig or a hen, they do it at their peril;  
 " for, if these animals stir one inch from  
 " their crib, they trespass on the ground  
 " of the Gentleman Farmer, and become  
 " fair

" fair game to young Master and his  
 " mischievous companions. The poor  
 " Cottagers, humbled at length in their  
 " minds as in their situations, and mixed  
 " with mere mercenaries of the lowest  
 " class, gradually acquire the sentiments,  
 " the habits, the vices of Slaves. They  
 " neglect their persons, they grasp at low  
 " gratifications, and forgetting the church,  
 " consider Sundays and other holidays,  
 " only as so many intervals of ease.

" Is not the monopolization of land,  
 " then, an evil that demands the inter-  
 " ference of the Legislature? It certainly  
 " does, if population, virtue, and happi-  
 " ness are to be preferred to depopulation,  
 " vice, and misery. There are many ways  
 " of restraining monopolization of land,  
 " without invading the property, or doing  
 " the smallest injury to the Landholder:  
 " nay, the restraint of monopolization,  
 " and the increase of independent culti-  
 " vators of land, would redound exceed-  
 " ingly to the Landholder's advantage. A  
 " law

“ law might be enacted for limiting the  
 “ extent of farms, as in the Austrian Ne-  
 “ therlands: or, if this should be thought  
 “ improper, and that new taxes are yet to  
 “ be raised, what subjects of taxation can  
 “ be more productive, or what more justly  
 “ liable to an impost, than large farms  
 “ and short leases? A tax might be im-  
 “ posed on barren and uncultivated lands,  
 “ and so regulated, as to engage the Pro-  
 “ prietor either to cultivate them himself,  
 “ or to resign them to the community for  
 “ general distribution. But I pretend  
 “ not to treat, though I most heartily re-  
 “ commend attention to this important  
 “ subject. I shall only observe in general,  
 “ that many occasions will occur when  
 “ such regulations may be introduced,  
 “ even under colour of other objects, as  
 “ may tend effectually, though by remote  
 “ and indirect influence, to promote the  
 “ independence of the plough. To watch,  
 “ and if possible to create such occasions,  
 “ and to devise such regulations, is among  
 “ the noblest efforts of genius, and legis-  
 “ lative wisdom.

“ With regard to entails, they should  
 “ be entirely abolished, as most odious  
 “ abominations.”

The mode of gradual regulation, by which this political œconomist would redress grievances is as judicious, as the warmth with which he represents them is truly disinterested and benevolent. I like not charity that seeks for objects in another hemisphere. Commend me to Captain Newte, who deplores the lot of the poor Cottager at home : to Mr. Dempster, who labours to find comfortable subsistence in his native Isle, for the poor emigrant Highlander ; \* and to Lord Rawdon, the generous advocate for unfortunate, not fraudulent insolvent debtors : of whom it has been well observed, “ That, though he  
 “ may boast of more than noble blood,  
 “ his descent derives additional lustre from  
 “ his talents and virtues : an Hero, *sans*  
 “ *peur*

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\* Who often goes under an Indenture, for a course of years, as a Labourer, to the Back Settlements of America !



“ *peur et sans remords*; \* and who has  
 “ exerted, and not in vain, in the cause  
 “ of poor debtors, that patient investiga-  
 “ on, that justness of conception and rea-  
 “ soning, and that talent for public speak-  
 “ ing, which, with an independent for-  
 “ tune, have rendered him the pride and  
 “ the hope of his country.” It is to be  
 observed of this generous and accomplish-  
 ed Nobleman, as of the ingenious Tra-  
 veller above-mentioned, that his plans of  
 Reform unite philanthropy with politi-  
 cal wisdom. He is not for abolishing all  
 imprisonment for debt, in a sudden and  
 summary manner, as the “great hero of  
 humanity, Mr. Wilberforce, would be, if  
 consistent with himself. No : his Lord-  
 ship patronizes the safe and just method  
 of gradual regulation : the grand princi-  
 ple of his Bill being a discrimination be-  
 tween fraudulent and insolvent debtors ;  
 and a progression towards greater leniency ;  
 in each step, however, of which, each party  
 may know what he has to expect.

D 4

The

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\* The Motto of the immortal Chevalier Bayard,

The Abettors and Associates of the great ENTHUSIAST give out, that the Bill for which he, it seems, is to make an annual motion, is also intended not as a direct, but an indirect and gradual Abolition of Slavery. It is true, that as our Islands do not require more than ten thousand Negroes, yearly, to keep up the stock of the old Plantations, though a much greater number be necessary for the cutting down of the woods, and the cultivation of new ground; it would be several years before the old stock of imported Negroes would die wholly out; and, before the Estates in the West-Indies would be turned wholly into waste land, it might be twenty, or perhaps thirty. But long before that period, if the Slave Trade be immediately abolished, some convulsion in Jamaica, similar to that in St. Domingo, may decide the fate of the West-India Islands, and ultimately, perhaps, involve that of the British Empire. It is a well-known property in human nature, that all passions, pride, and revenge amongst the rest, are

are inflamed with the hope of gratification : nor are the Africans famed for uncommon moderation of temper. A general sympathy with the Negroes, an indignation at their wrongs, avowed and re-echoed from year to year, in the British Parliament, cannot but feed the secret sparks of latent discontent and revenge, and threaten some sudden eruption. That the impending cloud has not broken before this time, has not been matter of greater joy than of surprise to the West-India Merchants and Planters. But the moment the Negroes are informed that no more of their brethren are to come to their assistance, the gathering storm may be expected to fall. They will naturally imagine that all the labour wanted for clearing wood-lands, of which there are still vast tracts, and for the cultivation of Sugar, must fall on them and their offspring. Negroes in Africa are to be spared, but they are to be doomed to redoubled labour. Is it possible that these considerations, at a time when uproar rules in the French Colonies, and a party

party at home, under the banners of a supposed Prince or King, \* exalts the signal for Revolt and Insurrection? Is it possible, under such circumstances, that the present Stock of Slaves should not murmur, mutiny, and have recourse to plots for assassination and massacre? An appeal is made to arms; and, which ever side prevail, the carnage must be dreadful: death to thousands of the Slaves, and indispensable punishment, by way of example, to others, accompany or follow their defeat: but if they should succeed so far as to murder, exterminate, or bring into bondage every White person in the British Colonies, would the British Government, would the French, would the Spanish, would the Dutch, suffer such an atrocity to pass without condign punishment? Or if they should be passive spectators, would the Negroes, with all the fury and blindness of savage nature, after wasting, in riot, both the stores from Europe, and the fruits of the soil,

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\* Such, it is well known, the Negroes account Mr. Wilberforce.



foil, be able to retreat from the horrors of bloody anarchy, and discord among themselves, into the safe refuge of regular Government? Setting aside all regard to those British Subjects, whose ruin must follow a direct Abolition of the Slave Trade, a matter about which Mr. Wilberforce and his Disciples seem to be very little concerned; those Gentlemen should, for the sake of their dear Blacks, temper their zeal with prudence.

Those great Patrons of Humanity and Reformers of Trade should farther consider, on this head, that though they should be able so far to infatuate the British Legislature, as to get an Act passed for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, the West-India Planters would not be without the means of obtaining Slaves, though at a loss to themselves, and a still greater loss to the British nation, \* by the assistance of their

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\* Incurred by that diminution of shipping and seamen, which the Abolition of the African Trade must occasion.

their friends in North America, and also from the Dutch, Danish, and other Islands: from whence it would be no difficult matter to bring in Negroes privately. Have those Gentlemen calculated how many ships of war it would take, to prevent an illicit supply of Negroes? If they have, do they mean to keep up a perpetual war with the Planters and Traders? And, if this also be their intention, do they imagine that the Planters will be prevented from sending the produce of their Estates to North America, and to every sea-port town in Europe? Even by our Colonial Laws, as they now stand, it is in their power to trade to any port to the southward of Cape Finisterre, or to any port, after touching and taking out a new clearance, at some port in Britain. The West-India Trade being thus diverted into new channels, is it necessary to point out the loss that must thence accrue to the Navigation, and to numerous Shipbuilders, Manufacturers, and Labourers in this country?

If

If Mr. Wilberforce were at all acquainted with Trade, and the ways in which Traders can evade the Revenue Laws, when they are urged by a strong interest to do so, he would accompany his Motion, for the immediate Abolition of the Slave Trade, with a number of Bills, for more Acts of Parliament, in order to defeat the contrivances that will be fallen on by many thousands of Planters, Merchants, and Navigators, to promote their own interests, in defiance of new Trade Laws, enacted in direct contradiction to the spirit of that series of former Laws, under the protection of which the West-India Colonies have hitherto flourished.

Gentlemen, the West-India Planters have reason to congratulate one another on the present alarming occasion, that their affairs, in common with those of the State at large, are not embarked on board the frail vessel of unqualified Democracy, ready to be agitated, tossed, and overset by every popular gale—but in those of a  
mixed

mixed Monarchy, capable of cool reasoning, of combining causes with effects, and making a just estimate of the cases and the claims of different orders of people. To fly, point blank, to metaphysical perfection, without regard to circumstances, like a hood-winked hawk mounting upward, until he drop down, from fatigue, upon the earth, may entitle the blind Zealot to vulgar praise and acclamation; but can never merit or draw the just esteem of sober and enlightened minds; aware, that in this sublunary state we have nothing unmixed, nothing certain, nothing absolutely independent; and that the utmost prerogative of human policy, consists in making the most of present circumstances and situations.

Thus far, Gentlemen, I have endeavoured to combat the egregious injustice and folly, of all attempts to promote the general interests of Humanity, by a direct and immediate Abolition of the Slave Trade, on the grounds of natural religion, or the  
will



will of God, expressed, for the good of his creatures, in the order of the world; the means by which Slavery has been gradually worn away, and Liberty introduced, in all past times, and by means similar to which similar effects may be produced again; the political inconveniencies that would flow from a direct Abolition of the African Trade to the British Nation, as well as ruin to hundreds of thousands of individual sufferers: nay, and even to the poor Negroes on our Plantations themselves; whose passions, excited by that measure to an ungovernable height, must break forth in an explosion, ultimately fatal to themselves, as well as calamitous to their Masters. By these, and other arguments which will readily occur, on a calm investigation, and dispassionate consideration of the subject in question, the firm wisdom of the British Government, it is hoped, will resist and repel a Fanaticism, which fully justifies a favourite tenet of the celebrated Doctor Berkely, Bishop of Cloyne, "That nations, as well as the individuals

“viduals of which they are composed, are  
 “subject to fits of insanity.”

While that Fanaticism smokes on towards some violent eruption, a circumstance to which that very spirit, more than any other, gave birth, is urged in its support, and called as an auxiliary to compassion with woes, with which we are very little acquainted,\* to heighten the clamour against the West-India Planters and Merchants. The devastation and burning of some hundreds of Plantations in St. Domingo, occasioned the loss of about 46,000 hogheads of Sugar, being nearly half of the usual quantity which France, on an average, received annually from that Colony, and which enabled her to supply all those places in Europe which are in want of Sugar, and are now supplied from this country.

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\* At least, less acquainted than with a variety of sorrows that are present with us every day, and press upon our senses—when these are not stupified and absorbed in the contemplation of distant and ideal grievances.

country. That lamentable circumstance, together with a scanty crop last year on our own Islands, but that circumstance chiefly, has occasioned a great scarcity, for some months past, and consequently a great rise in the price of Sugar. Mr. Wilberforce, with his Associates, raise a cry against the Planters, whom they ignorantly arraign as a set of squeezing and hard-hearted Monopolists, who, at the same time that they are forcing the Negroes to labour hard in dust and heat abroad, are laying their heads together for grinding the face of the Poor at home. This is not a little provoking—Those men raise up, and correspond with societies of men in France, called “Friends to Blacks;” those Friends to Blacks, so raised, animated, and supported, occasion an insurrection and devastation in St. Domingo, that insurrection and devastation in St. Domingo occasion a scarcity, and consequently a rise in the price of Sugar: and yet those men, those pious humane *Reformers* (not Authors to be sure) of Grievances, have the effrontery to charge the high prices of Sugars

on the West-India Planters. What, Gentlemen, do ye not know your own offspring? No more did the great Author of all Evil know his progeny, when he found her sitting at the gates of hell:

“ I know thee not, nor ever saw till now  
 “ Sight more detestable than him \* and thee. †  
 “ —T’whom thus the Portress of Hell-gate replied:  
 “ Hast thou forgot me, then, and do I seem  
 “ Now in thine eye so foul: once deem’d so fair!  
 “ —All on a sudden, miserable pain  
 “ Surpris’d thee, dim thine eyes, and dizzy swum  
 “ In darkness, while thy head flames thick and fast,  
 “ Threw forth; till on the left side op’ning wide,  
 “ Likest to thee in shape and count’nance bright,  
 “ Out of thy head I sprung.”

*Milton’s Par. Lost, B. 11.*

Uninformed and unthinking people are apt to confound the idea of a Monopoly with that of the practice of Forestalling, or hoarding or buying up any article, before there is a natural demand for it, with a view to raise the price. It cannot, and, indeed,

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\* Death.

† Sin.



indeed, it is not alledged by men of business and just information on the subject, that the present enormous price of Sugar is to be imputed, in any degree, to the West-India Planters or Merchants. " At a General Court of the United Company of Merchants of England trading to the East-Indies, held at their house in Leadenhall-street, on Thursday the 15th of March, 1792," a Motion (among others) was made, seconded, and unanimously agreed to, " That the present enormous price of Sugar is owing to the annual importation of that article being very unequal to the increased consumption in Great Britain, and the demand for exportation." See the Report from the Committee of Warehouses of the United East-India Company, relative to the culture of Sugar. In the same paper, p. 12, it is said—" The most productive of all the West-India Islands, St. Domingo, has been ravaged by civil commotions, and many of its choicest Plantations are totally destroyed." From the latest accounts

received it appears, that the devastations which for a time seemed to have subsided, have again been carried on with ungovernable fury: so that but little of its productions are at present to be expected, or perhaps for some period to come.

This calamity has not affected France alone, its influence has been also felt in this country. The several Continental Markets that were furnished by France, and even France herself, now look to Great Britain for a supply. This has created a vast foreign trade: from which circumstance, the price of Sugar is now at such an exorbitant rate of cost, as to be most severely felt by the lower and middle orders of the Community.

The West-India Merchants are always ready to sell what Sugar they have; and to produce it at market at all seasons, and, generally, as soon as it arrives. Merchants, who are the Importers of Sugar, never buy up that article again in London,

don, upon any account. It is true, there is a class of Dealers in Sugar, known under the name of *Jobbers*, who buy Sugars from the Merchants to sell it again to the Grocers, and others in smaller quantities, all over town. But into such retail, the Merchants, who will not divide their large parcels, never enter. The Sugar Refiners, also, buy up quantities, in order to lay in a stock for their own business during the Winter. But neither of these practices of Jobbers and Sugar-Refiners, can be considered in the light of Forestalling, nor were they practised, last Autumn, more than usual. Indeed, the prices, owing to short quantities from our Islands, were so high, that to have dealt deeply in this way, would have been very dangerous. The true cause of the high price of Sugars is no other, than that which has been stated,----the horrible insurrection in St. Domingo, co-inciding in point of time with a season less productive, than usual in our own Islands. As better crops are expected this year, from all the Islands, and other Settlements of those of

other nations as well as our own, a sufficiency, it is reasonably to be expected, will be produced, for affording a supply to all Europe ; the loss of the forty-six, or fifty thousand hogsheads, arising from the troubles of St. Domingo, will be less felt ; and the price of course, become more moderate.

This fanaticism about Slavery, and this temporary rise in the price of Sugar, united, have given birth to some practices and projects which call for a serious consideration. The self-denying resolutions of weak, though well-meaning people, to abstain wholly from the use of Sugar, might be considered as an innocent whim, if it did not tend, and that, it must be owned, in a very emphatic manner, to impress the minds of their neighbours with a notion, that all the stories of cruelties inflicted on the Negroes are true. If any thing could be expected from opposing sense to nonsense, argument to folly and fanaticism, it might be observed, to the

Abjurors



Abjurors of Sugar, that the Apostle Paul, with equal liberality and piety, exhorted the first Christians to "eat whatever was set before them, asking no questions, for conscience sake." It would be prudent in tender consciences, of the present day, to attend to the Apostle's precept, lest their argument about "art and part, and being accessory to the sufferings of Negroes," should be found to prove too much. If they are to turn with abhorrence from every thing that is connected with the labour of Negroes, they must lay aside all garments made of cotton, the articles of Ginger and Allspice, of Rice and Tobacco; the use of Chocolate; all sorts of dye-stuffs, as Indigo, Logwood, and Fustick; &c. as well as Mahogany for furniture; inasmuch as the probability is, that these articles are not furnished to us, originally, without the labour of Negroes. But, for two capital articles, Gold and Silver, we are wholly indebted to the toil of Slaves: the poor Miners, who are condemned to subterraneous lives—doomed never to see

the face of Nature and the cheerful light of day, nor friends, nor sacred home!— With the use of Sugar, that of Tea, too, a very pleasing and harmless cordial, must be laid aside.

Another project, set in motion by the present rage about Sugar and Slavery, is that of the importation of Sugar from the East-Indies, particularly from the Province of Bengal, and bringing it home under no higher duty than that imposed on West-India Sugar. This scheme supposes,

In the first place, that no regard ought to be paid to those Acts of Parliament under which the Colonies were settled, nor to that mutual Compact between Great Britain and the West-Indies, whereby it is established, that all the Sugar and other articles produced by the Colonies, shall be imported into this country; and that every article of our manufacture, that may be wanted, shall be taken, in return, by the Colonists. The importation of Sugar from Foreign  
Set-

Settlements was, indeed, allowed, but under the burden of such heavy duties, as amounted to a prohibition, or implied a necessity of re-exportation.\* Great numbers of people, invited by those laws, settled in the West-India Islands; and many millions of money were laid out on their cultivation. Besides what has been expended in the cultivation and stocking of Estates, we are to take into account the money laid out in the purchase of Woodlands, in several of the Islands not yet cleared, especially in Jamaica, which is scarcely half cultivated: which Woodlands are therefore to be accounted their property, as much as any Estate whatever is considered to be private property in Britain. Is it not a settled maxim of law in this country, that if any man's house is to be pulled down, or a road cut through any Landholder's Estate, for the general benefit of the Public, compensation is to be made to the Proprietor?

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\* In which case a drawback was given equal to the duty.

The present period of daring Innovation is not, it would seem, the most proper for setting examples of change and revolution. It is well observed by Lord Saltoun, whom none will accuse as inimical to the interests and rights of Humanity, any more than to those of the British Empire, that “ It is the glory of the British Constitution to be founded not on force or fear, but on justice, or a regard to the rights and happiness of mankind. “ It professes to secure the property and the privileges of every man ; to enforce claims, and to redress injuries. This “ spirit of equity diffuses a benign radiance around the majesty of Government, and establishes the Thrones of Kings on the firmest foundations. Despotism, which aims not to secure, but to command and seize private property, “ produces, in the Sovereign, inconsistency and capriciousness—in the Subject, distrust and disaffection. It debases and “ enervates the mind, destroys good faith and every virtue, and, by means of oppression,



“ preffion, on the one hand, and a desire  
 “ of change on the other, prepares the  
 “ way for the moſt fatal revolutions. Mild  
 “ and free Governments, on the contrary,  
 “ ſecure poſſeſſions, ſtimulate exertion,  
 “ nourish hope, and attach the human  
 “ heart to the authority of equal laws,  
 “ with a kind of filial confidence and affec-  
 “ tion.” *Thoughts on Diſqualification, &c.*

It is for the Legislature, and all who  
 have an intereſt in the authority of the  
 laws, and the good faith of Government,  
 to take care that injuſtice to the Planters,  
 may not be followed by confuſion in the  
 Weſt-Indies, and this again by confuſion  
 in other parts of the Britiſh Empire. Eve-  
 ry thing, at the preſent criſis, ſhould be  
 kept as quiet as poſſible. The Political  
 Body, already under a ſtrong degree of ex-  
 citement, needs not farther ſtimulation,  
 which might lead to feveriſh diſorder; but  
 rather of retirement and repoſe. Let us  
 wiſely anticipate the convulſions that muſt  
 follow

follow the Abolition of the Slave Trade, first in the West-Indies, but afterwards amidst various classes of turbulent and disaffected men; and we may add, among men who, though not naturally turbulent or factious, could not but be discontented, and ripe for innovation, being cut off from that employment, which the West-India and African Trades, in all their ramifications, were wont to furnish.

Neither the West-India Planters and Merchants, nor others connected with them, can object, or disapprove of the East-India Company's making a trial of raising and bringing home Sugar from India. All that is contended for is, that India Sugar shall not be imported into Britain at the same duty with that from the West-Indies.

This would not only be in direct contradiction to the Compact between Britain and the Colonies, but to the general convenience, prosperity, strength and security of the Empire.

If

1. If what is said be true, that the Natives of India can make Sugar, by means of earthen pots, without the assistance of our implements, there will be a proportionable reduction in our Manufactures and Trade; for, at present, we furnish all those implements to the West-India Planters: but if they cannot make Sugar without such implements, it is not very probable, as we do not yet hear of any large buildings being erected in India, such as are to be found on every Plantation in the West-Indies, that any such quantity of Sugar can be made and sent to Europe, as can give any check to the price of Sugar for many years. Nor, if such a quantity of Sugar could be made or obtained, could a sufficient number of ships be engaged for bringing it home, until it were quite certain that they should not miss a freight, in speculating on the carriage of that article. But some years might elapse before that matter could be ascertained; and, in the mean time, if our own resources in the West-Indies should not be kept open, as usual,

usual, the price of Sugar must still continue to be high, and even to increase. If the West-India Planters, by an Abolition of the Slave Trade, are debarred from cultivating more Estates, while those now under cultivation are dwindling away, year after year, in the proportion of three out of each hundred Negroes, lost by death,\* and their crops diminishing in a like proportion, it will not only require a great length of time, but many hundred thousands of pounds, to erect buildings in the East-Indies sufficient to manufacture Sugar enough, to make up the deficiency that must naturally happen in the produce of our West-India Settlements.

2. But, could our Settlements in the East-Indies be brought to furnish the quantity of Sugar which will be yearly lost in the West, why at so much pains to cultivate the former at the expence of the latter?

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\* By which, in the course of fifteen years, their number is reduced nearly one-half.



latter? What an immense difference in the quantities of our manufactures which they respectively require, and the tonnage of shipping they employ? It is true, we hear much of new channels *to be* opened for our Manufactures in the East. In opposition to this, it is sufficient to observe, that, in our West-Indies, such avenues are already opened. On the subject of the comparative utility to Great Britain of the East and the West-Indies, it is farther to be observed, that colonial and dependent Provinces may be situated, on the one hand, at too small, and on the other, at too great a distance from the Mother Country; but that the West-Indies are placed, with regard to Britain, in a happy medium between both these extremes. Of the first case, we have an example in Ireland, subdued, and part of it colonised, from time to time, by England. Intelligence was immediately conveyed to one Kingdom of what passed in another. All distinctions appeared odious between kindred and neighbouring States. A political fermentation

tion was and still is kept up, which is likely to terminate, as that between England and Scotland, in total separation, or complete union. Immense distance, and a total dissimilarity of climate, customs, and manners, and other circumstances arising chiefly from thence, preclude all contention of this kind, between Britain and her Asiatic Settlements. But from those circumstances an evil springs of another kind. It is not in nature that Britain can long hold in subjection a country at the distance of almost half the globe. European Nations may conspire with the Native Powers, advancing in the Art of War, to expel us from India. But the West-Indies are more within the reach of our influence and protection; and our connection with them is of the happiest kind, being neither too close, like our connection with Ireland, nor too distant and loose, like that with India. The West-India Planters, Merchants, Sailors, and others, are Citizens of both Britain and the Islands; which, if I may be allowed a familiar

familiar simile, are as a summer-house to England, since so great a number of its inhabitants are in the habit of going and coming between them.

3. Were an Act passed for importing Sugar from the East-Indies on equal duty with those on the West-India Sugars, it could have no effect to lower the price of Sugar in this country, while our own Islands supply a sufficiency for our consumption, which they have always done, and even a surplus for exportation; as appears from the East-India Reports already mentioned. But this good effect would indeed arise from an importation of Sugar from India, to be re-exported to Foreign Parts, a draw-back being paid equal to the duty, that it would keep our West-India Sugars at home, and consequently at a reasonable price. Thus, a perfect harmony might be established between the East-India Company and the West-India Planters; and that harmony promote the general interest of the British

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Empire:

Empire: provided always, that there be no Abolition of the Slave Trade. For, if that measure were to be adopted, then France and Spain would have the whole trade in the course of some years; and we, among others, must be supplied by them. The Dutch and the Portuguese, too, would be encouraged to augment their Plantations, when they should find that our Islands are deprived of the means, not only of raising new, but of cultivating the old Estates.

4. As the importation of Sugar from Bengal, at equal duties, could have no effect to lower the price of Sugar in this country, while our own Islands supply a sufficiency for our consumption, so neither, in this case, would it increase the Public Revenue, which can never amount to more than the duties on the consumpt, or what is enough to supply Great Britain and Ireland. All the rest that is imported, whether from the East or West-Indies, must be re-exported; on which the duty paid on importation is drawn back.

At



At the General Court of Proprietors of East-India Stock, already mentioned, held on the 15th of March, a very specious Orator, in a speech setting forth the enormous price of Sugar, and the necessity of applying to Government to place the duties and draw-backs on India Sugars upon an equality with those of the West-Indies, affirmed, that "if the importation of East India Sugar is not allowed on these terms, the Sugar Trade, and the Carrying Trade in general of India, will be driven into the hands of Foreigners, who are now sending ships from various ports of Europe and America, for the purchase of Sugar, to India."\* The East-India Company have

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\* That Orator, by a speech full of gaudy flowers, and bold metaphors, such as that of the Mysorean Mountains (if cultivation should be repressed in every other part of India) laughing, jumping for joy, and pouring out their treasures in the lap of Europe, imposed, in a wonderful manner, on his Audience; but discovered great ignorance of both the East-India and West-India Trades, as well as inconsistency with himself. At the same time that he admitted how much the West-India Trade

both the right and the power to lay a heavy duty, say of twenty, or even thirty per cent. on all foreign ships coming to Bengal, or any other part of their dominions, to load Sugar : by which means, the whole Sugar Trade would be confined to our own ships. By the bye, it is well worth the Company's while, before they give into schemes

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Trade had contributed to the public strength and revenue, up to this very moment, he supposed the tide of affairs to be turned all in an instant, as if by a miracle; and that the prosperous state of our Trade with the West-Indies would be converted into loss and ruin, unless another party were to be admitted into a participation of the Sugar Market of Britain, who could fetch Sugar from Bengal at a much less price than they could bring it from the West-Indies. It was a bold undertaking, but not unsuitable to such a Maintainer of Paradoxes, to attempt the subversion of that series of laws, by which our Sugar Trade with the West-Indies had hitherto flourished; and at the same time to reduce the price of Sugar : all in one speech. Mr. Dallas viewed the subject in a soberer and sounder light, who considered such attempts as proceeding merely from a thirst of something new—a wanton desire to innovate upon established laws, or some such madness as severed America from us.

schemes of entering into a great Trade, in Sugar, with Great Britain, or with Europe through Great Britain, to attempt the recovery of the Sugar Trade in Asia, which they once possessed, which gave employment to the Natives, precluded, in a great measure, foreign importation, and yielded a considerable Revenue. Instead of procuring, as is now done at different British Ports in India, Sugar from China, Manilla, Batavia, &c. let them raise, in Bengal, and send Sugar all over the East, at moderate duties—to the Back Country, and any other of those new channels of commerce that, we hear, are to be opened; but with greater probability of success, as formerly, to Madras, the Malabar Coast, Bombay, Surat, Scindy, Muscat, other Ports of the Persian Gulph, to Mocha, and to Judda. If the East-India Company avail themselves, as there is not a doubt but they will, of the immense resources for a Trade in Sugar which they have formerly enjoyed, and may again enjoy, there will be no reason for any in-

interference between them, in that article, and the West-India Planters; nor is there the least room to apprehend, whatever may be the ideas of sanguine minds, over-heated by an intense and partial contemplation of their object, that the Court of Directors will hastily risk much on a competition in the Sugar Trade with the West-Indies; or that they would be inclined to do so, at the expence of justice to a body of men who have embarked their all in the Sugar Trade, and the Faith of Government, pledged, on fair conditions, to maintain them, even exclusively, in that Trade, if they could. At the meeting of East-India Proprietors on the 15th of March, Mr. Baring declined signing the Report from the Committee of Warehouses, relative to the culture of Sugar “ from a belief that “ the Committee were much too sanguine “ in their expectations. He thought that “ Sugar might be raised advantageously, “ and that it might, *in time*, become a beneficial article of traffick; but doubted the propriety of our turning our attention



"tention from the other settled articles :  
 "he doubted if we should be able to  
 "bring, for some years, any great quan-  
 "tity; and mentioned also, the appro-  
 "priation of the present investment, both  
 "as to tonnage and money. Any thing  
 "like ungenerous competition with the  
 "West-India Interest, he utterly disclaim-  
 "ed, and was decidedly of opinion that  
 "the East-India Company could never ex-  
 "pect to undersell them, and consequent-  
 "ly never materially injure them." \*

While such men as Mr. Baring, whose  
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 rally known than his abilities and infor-  
 mation in all matters of business are ac-  
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\* See the Diary, or Woodfall's Register, for Tues-  
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competition between the East-India Company and the West-India Planters, it must be submitted to without murmuring, and even with sentiments of amity. It is not expected by the West-India Merchants and Planters, that, for their interest and gratification, there should *never* be any chance of a reduction in the price of Sugar. They only expect and require of the justice of Parliament, not to concentrate on their head such a sudden assemblage of disadvantages as must overwhelm them. For, what would the great ENTHUSIAST, with his Followers, have done? Nothing less than to prevent the West-India Merchants from exporting Sugar; to open an entrance, at equal duties, for Sugar from Bengal; and, at the same time, to abolish, not gradually, but at one stroke, the Slave Trade!!!—This is the sage Legislator whom thousands of Europeans blindly admire, and tens of thousands of Negroes devoutly adore! He would strangle at once, with a triple cord, a Trade which directly, or in its consequences involves more than  
a third



a third part of the British Commerce and Navigation. The poor deluded Negroes, in the notion they form to themselves of King MASSA BILBE-FOSSE, "*Figure a man of princely dignity of deportment, of great prudence and foresight, deprecating the removal of the ancient Land-Marks, inculcating the proverbial wisdom of former times, commanding, by his presence, the most profound respect and attention, and disarming and composing the tumultuous rabble !*"

*Ac veluti magno in populo cum sæpe coorta est  
Seditio, sævitque animis ignobile vulgus ;  
Jamque faces et saxa volant, furor arma ministrat :  
Tum, pietate gravem ac meritis si forte virum quem  
Conspexere, silent, arreclisq; auribus astant :  
Ille regit dictis animos, et pectora mulcet.*

Virg. Æn. lib. 1.

As when in tumults rise th' ignoble Crowd,  
Mad are their motions, and their tongues are loud ;  
And stones and brands in rattling volleys fly,  
And all the rustic arms that Fury can supply ;  
If then some grave and pious man appear,  
They hush their noise, and lend a list'ning ear ;  
He sooths, with sober words, their angry mood,  
And quenches their innate desire of blood.

Such a man do the Negroes conceive  
Mr. Wilberforce to be ; a Peace-maker,  
not

not a Peace-breaker. He, on the other hand, supposes them to be, not a "*Hearty, well-fed, jolly, laughing, dancing, singing class of mortals, but poor and miserable, emaciated and woe-be-gone, like himself; dejected, worn down into decrepitude and sadness, by harsh usage, hard labour, and the want of things necessary to life.*" It is a pity but these mutual dear friends were better acquainted—the Lovers of Peace would have less cause of apprehension and alarm!

The party who are the most zealous Advocates for the importation of Sugar from India, and from all quarters, are the Sugar Refiners: these are become so numerous in London, that they complain of wanting sufficient work. They say, that "they could manufacture as much Sugar again as they now do;" and they, therefore, anxiously wish for the importation of Sugar from all parts of the globe, with a view to make, in London, a monopoly of that article, and thereby to supply the greatest part of Europe with both Lump and

and Loaf Sugar. Now we shall have another instance of the danger attending innovation, even where innovation appears to be plausible, if we reflect on the consequences that would necessarily flow from the establishment of so prodigious a manufacture, even an exclusive manufacture of Sugar in the British Metropolis. What is to become of the immense quantity of Melasses, and Scum, which, together, leave one-fourth part of the whole Muscovadoes used for refining? At present, the quantity of Melasses produced, lie heavy on hand, and are sold cheap; but if a double quantity, or a half more were made, the value of that article would be reduced probably under one penny per pound, or nine shillings per cwt: and in which case, Melasses would become so cheap, that the Distillers would work nothing else, neither Barley, nor any other grain; the effect of which, on the landed interest, it is unnecessary to specify. A kind of Small-beer, too, is made out of Melasses, and the practice of making it would, no doubt, be

be more used, in proportion as the price of the Melasses should be diminished.— Melasses, too, with the poorer people, is made to supply the place of Butter. These particulars furnish matter for the most serious consideration, and must be left to the deliberation of the Legislature. For our *Sugar Bakers*, they are quite indifferent whether Sugar comes from our own West India Colonies, or from Bengal, or from China, Batavia, or any of the French or Danish Colonies, so that they have but Sugar for carrying their works to the height of a Sugar-manufactory for all Europe. For this reason, most cordially do they join, and even instigate the present clamour against the West-India Planters,

The cry and uproar now is, “ Down with the West Indies ! whose Planters are RUFFIANS, and who continue the Slave Trade, and mercilessly, for their own interest, keep up, and enhance the price of Sugar.” In this spirit, that very moderate  
and



and comprehensive Legislator, Mr. Wilberforce, and his Admirers, are now endeavouring to prevail on Government to prohibit Sugar from being exported to Foreign Markets. I shall speak a few words on the Crime of the West India Merchants endeavouring to make the most of their article, after I have just observed, that the immediate Prohibition of Exportation is not a measure that would affect the Planters and Merchants, who have only a very few hogsheds of Sugar at present on hand; but another class of men, the Grocers and Sugar Refiners, who purchased Sugar, on the faith of the present Laws, to sell it at Foreign Markets, at a better price than can be got for it here, especially at present, during the contagious phrenzy of leaving off the use of Sugar, as the best means of abolishing the Slave Trade. How would the preamble to such an Act run? "Whereas the palatable and wholesome article of Sugar, now rendered by habit, which affects human frames, as all other constitutions, a necessary of life, has, from the Insurrections in St. Domingo, fatally

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excited by the clamours in Europe against the Slave Trade, which clamours were however very reasonable and humane; from a temporary failure of Crops; and consequently from the high rates at which the aforesaid article has been sold, in a raw state, by Planters, Merchants, or their Agents, to Sugar-Refiners, Grocers, and other Venders and Retailers of the said article: therefore be it enacted, and by these presents it is enacted, that Sugars, for which the Grocers and others, Venders of Sugars, paid one shilling per pound, shall now be sold at eight-pence," &c. &c.

The price of Cheese has gradually been increased, in the course of a very few years, from 3d. and 4d. even to 7d. per pound: yet, would it not be very absurd to pass an Act for compelling the people of Cheshire to sell their Cheese at a lower price than it now fetches? Though Cheese is a great part of the food on which the labouring, that is, the most numerous and the most useful class of the people subsists? In like manner, the price of Hops veers  
be-

between 3l. 10s. and 10l. 10s. per hundred weight: the load of Hay from 50s. to 5l: and the hogshead of Cyder, which is sometimes so low as from 6d. to 1s. per gallon, in bad years brings from 20d. to 2s.

It is now submitted to the consideration of the Honourable Members of the House of Commons, whether it does not appear, 1. That the clamour that prevails against the West India Planters and Merchants be not chiefly owing to the Industry of certain Individuals, restless, fanatical, improvident, fraught with danger and public calamity?

2. Whether the Petitioners against the Slave Trade were competent to judge concerning the propriety of so bold a measure?

3. Whether we have not as many, and as miserable Objects of Compassion and Charity at home, as the Slaves employed in the actual Cultivation of the Soil in the West Indies?

4. It

4. If supposed (for we do not admit it would be real) relief and comfort should, by an Act of Parliament, be extended to so many of our African Labourers abroad: would not this ideal regard to the ease and well-being of the Negroes, excite a desire and expectation of similar regard and relief to other classes of men, in similar situations \* at home?

5. Was

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\* Seamen, pressed into the service, torn from their families, and often wounded and maimed; Husbandmen, ejected from their Possessions, held by their Ancestors for ages, by the avarice of great Landholders, and the monopolizing rage of throwing several moderate into one large Farm, or, perhaps, of converting whole Districts into Sheep-walks. Many of those Husbandmen, known in Scotland under the name of Tacksmen, had, from long possession, just as good a right to their Farms, as the great Lairds, or Lords, such as Macdonald, and others, had to their Estates. It is a pitiable spectacle, and a subject of high indignation, to see many of those ejected Tacksmen, with their children, seeking relief and subsistence, by engaging their Servitude, for a long term of years, in the Back Settlements of North America. This is the Servitude that we should be anxious to abolish. Mr. Mackenzie, of Seaforth; Mr. Mackenzie, of Torridon; the late Major Macleod, of Herries,



5. Was not Servitude the general condition of human nature in Europe, not many centuries back? And is it not still so in Russia, Poland, Denmark, Hungary, and many parts of Germany?

6. Have not sudden modes of Emancipation from Servitude been repeatedly tried in RUSSIA, even in our times, in vain? And does not the History of Modern  
G Europe

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Herries, and a few other Gentlemen, who, by the construction of Harbours, Roads, Warehouses, with necessaries and implements for Fishing, on reasonable terms—these are the true Philanthropists, whom the Legislature and whom the Public ought to encourage. The Plan now in agitation, for the dissemination of Knowledge, Enterprize, and Industry, at the Northern and Western extremities of Scotland, by translating one of the COLLEGES at Aberdeen to Inverness; and converting the empty Building, under the auspices of Messrs. Holland and Westel, into a Manufactory of the fine Scotch Wool into Garments of the FLEECY HOSIERY kind, so well adapted to Northern Latitudes, is highly worthy of all possible encouragement. The run from Aberdeen to the Baltic, where the demand for Fleecy Hosiery Garments will be great, when it is once known, is short and easy.

Europe prove, that the Abolition of Slavery has been gradual; and the joint effect of Religion, and of the prize of Liberty held out, on reasonable and easy terms, to the Industry and the good behaviour of those in a state of Servitude?

7. If human nature be the same \* in all times and countries, and similar moral causes be calculated to produce similar moral effects, is it not to be expected, that a fair prize would stimulate Industry, and lead to Liberty, in the West Indies, as heretofore in Europe? And from the same principles does it not follow, that as the Danes were wont to slaughter their Prisoners of War, when they could not get a ready Market for them in England, between four and five hundred years ago, so the Africans would be disposed, at this day, to act the same bloody part, in the same circumstances? Or, will it be said that

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\* A position strenuously maintained by those who contend for the Abolition of the Slave Trade.

that the Africans of the present times are more civilized than the Danes were between four and five hundred years ago? But the savage inhumanity of the Africans is a matter of fact, evinced not by reasoning only, but by most undoubted testimony.

8. Whether an Abolition of the Slave Trade, in defiance of Justice to the Planters, and at the expence of Subsistence to many hundreds of thousands, might not occasion Revolt abroad, and Tumult at home?

9. Can it be in justice said, that the Dearness of Sugar is owing to any Combination or unfair Artifice in the West-India Planters and Merchants? And is it not certain, that the late exorbitant price of Sugar is owing chiefly to the Disturbances in St. Domingo, and to the great demand for Sugar to Germany?

10. Is it the duty, or is it an object worthy of the British Government, to break

through established Laws, which tend, in their operation, to furnish a sufficient quantity of Sugar to keep that article, in Britain, at a moderate price, as has generally appeared, and will again appear in the space of a few months?

Gentlemen, while you turn your attention to the Motion for an Abolition of the Slave Trade, or to whatever may be connected with that subject, it is respectfully requested, and hoped, that you will bear in mind the following truth, That the West-India Planters are as warm Friends, as any in the British Empire, to the highest degree of Liberty, consistent with Order and Good Government, and the widest range of Humanity---Humanity not to Africans only, but also to Europeans.

FINIS.

